

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Shant Tchakerian on March 25, 2010.

2. The application has been amended as follows:

- In claim 13 (renumbered claim 1), in lines 5-6, after the word "data", please delete the phrase ", such as a key image or a keyword,". Thus, the 2nd limitation of claim 13 should read:
 - – a retrieve condition storage component that stores retrieve condition data for use as a retrieve condition when performing image retrieval; --
- In claim 22 (renumbered claim 8), in line 6, after the word "data", please delete the phrase ", such as a key image or a keyword,". Thus, the 2nd limitation of claim 22 should read:
 - – reading, from a retrieve condition storage component of the image apparatus, retrieve condition data for use as a retrieve condition when performing image retrieval; --

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- In claim 23 (renumbered claim 9), in line 9, after the word "data", please delete the phrase "such as a key image or a keyword". Thus, the 2nd limitation of claim 23 should read:
 - – reading, from the retrieve condition storage component, retrieve condition data for use as a retrieve condition; –

EXAMINER'S STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Regarding claims 13 (renumbered claim 1), 22 (renumbered claim 8), and 23 (renumbered claim 9), the primary reason for allowance is that the prior art fails to teach or reasonably suggest a retrieve condition storage component that stores retrieve condition data for use as a retrieve condition when performing image retrieval; a retrieval component that retrieves a retrieval result by searching for image data that matches or is similar to the retrieve condition data from among the plurality of image data stored in the image storage component connected to the connector component; an internal storage component that stores the retrieval result retrieved by the retrieval component, and a determination component that determines whether image data stored in another image storage component connected to the connector component, instead of the image storage component, has been retrieved by said retrieval component, wherein the retrieval component further retrieves a retrieval result from among a plurality of image data stored in said another image storage component using the common retrieve condition data which has been used with respect to the image storage component in a case where the determination component determines that image data stored in said another image storage component has not been retrieved, and the retrieval component does not again perform retrieval of a retrieval result on said another image storage component in a case where the determination component determines that image data stored in said another image storage component has been retrieved, and wherein

the internal storage component accumulatively stores the retrieval results retrieved by the retrieval component until there is an explicit delete instruction.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOHN M. VILLECCO whose telephone number is (571)272-7319. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Sinh Tran can be reached on (571) 272-7564. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/JOHN M. VILLECCO/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2622
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